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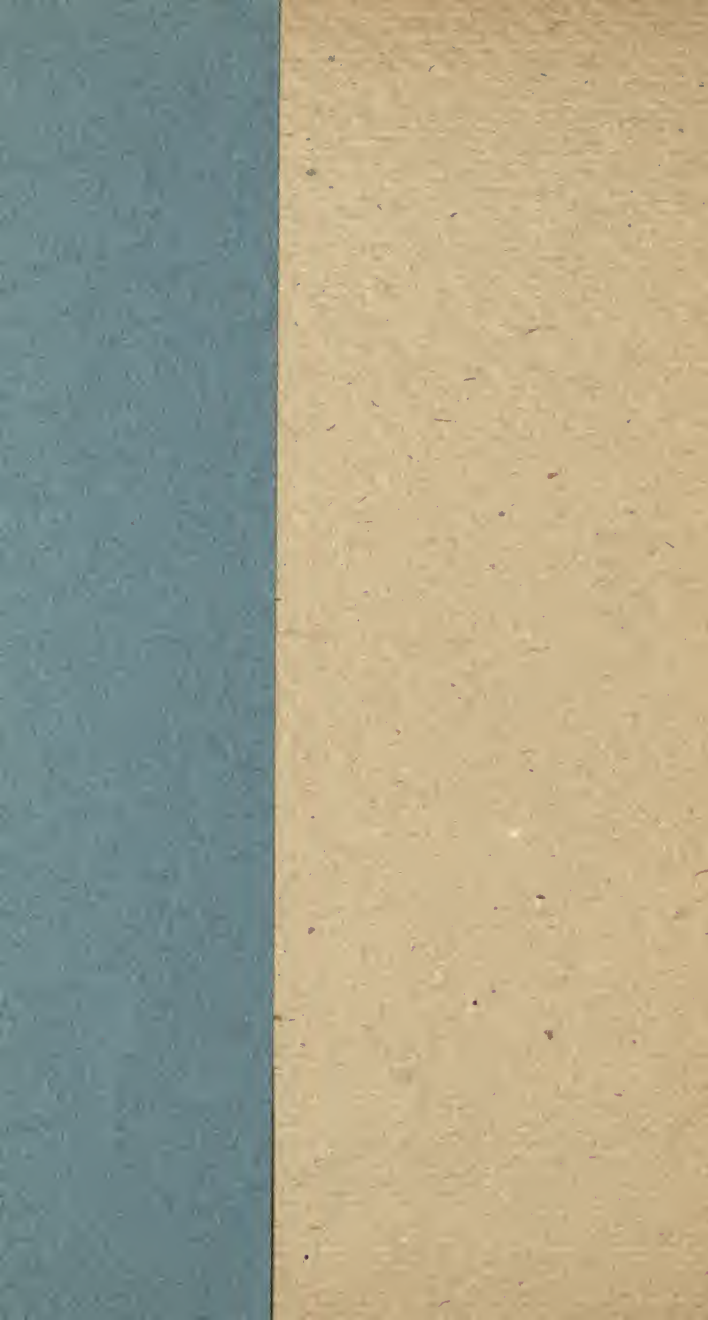
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Four Gardens

David Osborne Hamilton



OF YOUNGER POETS





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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

THE *Yale Series of Younger Poets* is designed to afford a publishing medium for the work of young men and women who have not yet secured a wide public recognition. It will include only such verse as seems to give the fairest promise for the future of American poetry,—to the development of which it is hoped that the Series may prove a stimulus. Communications concerning manuscripts should be addressed to the Editor, Professor Charlton M. Lewis, 425 St. Ronan Street, New Haven, Connecticut.

VOLUMES ISSUED, OR PLANNED FOR EARLY PUBLICATION.

- I. THE TEMPERING. *By Howard Buck.*
- II. FORGOTTEN SHRINES. *By John Chipman Farrar.*
- III. FOUR GARDENS. *By David Osborne Hamilton.*
- IV. SPIRES AND POPLARS. *By Alfred Raymond Bellinger.*

Four Gardens

DAVID OSBORNE HAMILTON



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TO
MARGARET.

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PRAYER.

JESUS, in my garden grow
Many roses row on row ;

Gentle lives these blossoms live ;
Glorifying earth they give

All their beauty unafraid :—
When most beautiful they fade.

Without bitterness they pass,
Torn and withered on the grass.

Teach me, Lord, how I may be
Such a flower unto Thee.

I. A TERRACED GARDEN.

BEFORE DAWN.

THERE is a time before the dawn of day
When voices of the birds are in the trees,
As though o'ercharged with song they sought a way
Too soon to overflow in ecstasies;
There is a sound in darkness before morn
As though of wings unfolding for swift flight
That scarce can wait, by rising winds upborne,
Till all the world is rapturous with light.
So, O my heart, long fed on mystery
Of deepest night, there stirs a song in you—
Eager to break in fullest rhapsody,
Longing to wing through burning heavens new!
O sun that rises, burst the clouds away!
O night of nights—how long? When comes the day?

THE MAN IN THE RYE.

HE seems so small beneath the coming night !
Among the grain he stands and gazes down
The wind-stirred hill in silence. From his sight
The twilight draws away the distant town.

O silent town, where minds of men about
Their lives have spun a web—one ancient maze,—
Your people, weaving on, are peering out
Through thoughts, close-woven, at the passing days.

For men weave webs to hide secure behind
Patterns most beautiful that snare their fears,
Or perish in the tangled skeins that bind
In one enchantment the unfathomed years ;

But you, lone figure there, what tyranny
Of thought comes to you 'neath the fading sky ?
In spite of all man's magic could you be
Just part of the dark earth and windy rye ?

PARTING.

FAREWELL—this is the end—our hearts at last
Just like that even clock have ticked us here
Beating an empty record of things past—

No ringing hour has struck! Come now, draw near
And place your hand in mine. The unlatched door
Swings slowly open. Feel the evening air!
Our fingers never clung this way before!

Can this late parting be a bond—look there!
A falling star! What waste of lonely days

Lost side by side—this moment changes all?
Must we unite because we part our ways?

Still through the dusk the host of crickets call—
Farewell. . . .

THE PRODIGAL.

ONCE more I walk your terraced paths, that pass
Through witchery of studied wantonness,
To seek the precious garden once I faced
In peril of its perfect loveliness.
I stand uncharmed and cold,—for I have placed
Bared feet among the freshness of new grass.

Plead not! I have no sentiment to stem
The flow of flowered love blown over-sweet.
Things wild as wind have in my breast been born
That lead through terror, tempest-black, to meet
And dare the splendor of sun-seeing morn—
Hide those soft lips,—lest mine should wither them!

TO THE "DIVINE EMILIE" (Marquise du Châtelet).

To think, in spite of all your chemistry
And stars new-lit in scientific light,
You—Voltaire's goddess—at the end should be
A courtier's pleasure for an idle night!
But deep within your heart there was that spot
That Cirey's knowledge could not wipe away;
No wit could save you from the common lot;
Though you came late you walked the well-worn way.
You drained the cup called love that life had brought,
Then took your pen and labored; there you stayed
Standing by Newton till the curtain's fall;
And, for the joy those thoughtless moments caught,
The price in full unflinchingly you paid.
You were a woman, madame, after all.

BLOOMFIELD HILLS.

O PURPLE asters and gold leaves, a golden road I travel by,
Beneath my feet the lilt of hills and one hawk hanging in
the sky.

Now summer's pageant droops its plumes; creative revelry is
done;
Soon on blooms overblown will dawn bleak autumn's cold and
silvered sun.

Are weary asters withering for music of the birds long past?
Still the wind sings a measure shrill:—dance! for chill winter
comes at last.

Come drain the last dregs of the sun till berries are both black
and sweet,
And rounded pears all wear a flush—O ecstasy of wind-kissed
wheat!

The apple trees drop crimson fruit amid the rush of golden
leaves,
Lost leaves that go awantoning through pompous ranks of corn
in sheaves;

But while in Bacchic rioting as free and wild as wind they go
Comes the first flutter of the flakes—the chastity and peace of
snow.

And you, vain poet, wandering beneath the glow of colored
days,
Must you too know white winter's grace—the silence on eternal
ways?

IN THE LOUVRE (Marbres Antiques).

No age unarms those full-blown heroes there!
All summer falls about that laughing faun!
How calm are those great women with the hair
Like water rippled by cool winds at dawn!
Surer than life, more peaceful than death's sleep,
Though their creators' hands are dust, still warm
With thoughts of vanished days those figures keep
The life that touched them templed in their form,
As though men once loved earth beyond all hope
And made that love their immortality,
With joy that from doomed bodies found release
And entered silent marble. Though I grope
Through these dim halls, I watch the purple sea
Lift its white waves beneath the sun of Greece.

MAY.

FILLED with the sun the earth her beauty yields,
The poppies redden recklessly in pride,
And cornflowers echo the blue depth of sky
Where wind makes silvery music in the rye ;
The daisies sprinkle the far country-side
As though the stars had fallen on the fields.

I fling myself on the warm, living hill ;
Beneath me on the path two figures pass ;
They laugh—he takes her arm and from above
Two wanton larks sweep low—while I, who love
So passionately each small blade of grass,
Lie here upon the hill—alone and still.

II. A SUNKEN GARDEN.

A PORTRAIT.

THE flowing art of his desire to please
Like magic veils the blackness of his way ;
He hides in smooth agreement, and with ease
Receives the thanks for gifts he cannot pay.
At night in his locked bedroom does he call
The little lies that hide beneath his tongue
And feed them sweets,—or praise his hands for all
The faith that they from trusting men have wrung ?
Or does he guard himself with stern commands,
And train his lips to curve—his eyes just so,—
A tyrant of good servants ? No :—instead,
Before his mirror I am sure he stands
Sleek to the last ! He smiles and does not know
The devil tucks him deftly into bed.

AJAX.

AJAX, the bull-dog, on his cushioned place
In the new Packard sits with chin held high.

Like some great withered pansy is the face

He turns upon the people passing by ;

And, as life goes unseen beneath his eyes,

Viola bends and with his soft ear plays.

How close her cheek upon his broad head lies !

And still unaltered is his pompous gaze !

My indignation he ignores each day :

But once I saw him in the pantry stand,

With eyes agleam, while James arranged a tray

And let a morsel slip from his deft hand ;

And Ajax stooped and ate it from the floor !

With dripping mouth he plead for one piece more !

PAN IN THE PLAZA.

O PAN has cast the reed-pipe from his lips,
His ivy for a silk hat flung away!
With coat-tails black, white-vested, now he trips
To clashing music of his cabaret!
No more on some unwary shepherd's vine
His careless troop holds festivals untold;
For coin he barter now the bottled wine
And in his pocket jingles the bright gold—
When wild plums purple for a thrush's song
And round the cherry trees the warm sun goes
To deck their boughs with rounding fruit that glows
In ruddy rings and clusters ripe ere long.

Deserted are Pan's pastures green and fresh;
No more unwearied satyr-revels pass
Beyond the dawn with leaping hoofs that thresh
The dew in showered diamonds on the grass.
No more through some moon-flooded grove there floats
The laughter of white-bosomed nymphs at play
Till every bird awakes to tune sweet notes
And all-impatient waits the coming day.
O nymphs, whose feet traced patterns on the ground
To teach the violets where they should grow,
Now o'er the polished grill-room floor you go
Encased in lifeless slippers round and round.

For Pan like Pluto has forsworn the sky;
Before his new court's subterranean door
His Master-Waiter with imperious eye
Reviews the jewelled damned and turns them o'er
To minions who conduct them Charon-wise
Across the flood of dancers to their place;
There sapphires far out-glitter women's eyes
And rouge is bloom of youth and rag-time grace.
Poor place, where sun-rays never can deplore
The lack of flowers and no bird has come
With song to be by fiddles stricken dumb,—
Where rain has never shamed the sterile floor!

Come, Pan ! Aside those dingy vestments throw
And on your body feel the joy of sun !
Come, Pan ! Or I will climb your hills and blow
Your lagging cloud-flocks 'cross the sky and run
Fleet races with the jealous wind all day
And be the first in crocus-buds to peep ;
Or rise all silvered from cool streams and play
Your pipes to rouse some drowsy nymph from sleep
And kiss from her wide waking eyes the fear ;
Then we will creep through roses side by side
And 'mid their scent and musk on mosses hide.
Come, Pan ! Spring lives again—and June is near !

TO AN ALLEY-CAT.

UP past the chimneys float your piercing cries.
I rise, and on a pointed roof-top see
You sit and blink those slanting, emerald eyes
Before the meek moon's silver purity.

Slayer of song! You cautious-whiskered fay,
Why do you dwell in man's disgrace and still
Disdain the might that makes the alley-way,
And seek no bounty from man's godlike will?

Why not find shelter in that mansion where
Fifi, the poodle, ages at his ease?
Look through the window! What a feast is there!
And Fifi sits upon his master's knees.

Now his small button-eyes are wet with hope—
Performing, circus-wise, he begs a bite! . . .
With tail like some sea-pirate's periscope
How scornfully you walk into the night!

CHANCE MEETING IN WASHINGTON SQUARE.

ON leaving the Brevoort that night
I turned into the square,
And met full in the moon's white light
A satyr standing there.

About his face a phosphorus glow,
While on his soiled coat-frills
Black tangled locks of hair hung low—
He talked of daffodils.

He led me to his scented lair,
Secure beneath the eaves ;
A print by Bakst—a Baudelaire
I saw with wine-stained leaves.

Pale shadow of Rome's fulsome lust !
Lean moth that feeds upon
Rich tapestry ! germ from the dust
Of golden Babylon !

NOVEMBER (New England).

HE wrestled with the wind or down he flung
His brown-limbed strength—'mid sun-made poppies lay
And called the soft, white clouds that o'er him hung—

Then laughed as they fled shyly on their way;
When careless trees shook living beauty low,

All day long flights of flaming leaves he raced
Till they took sanctuary in the snow

And left Pan naked on the frozen waste.

Miss Ann puts on her camphor-guarded gown

And trails it 'cross her carpet's well-worn rose,
To squint through yellowed curtain-lace as down

The street she deftly peers; for well she knows,
Should Pan by chance beneath her window go,

That at this season he would readily
Sell soul and body for her stove's warm glow,
Some bread and butter, and a cup of tea.

III. A CLOISTERED GARDEN.

THE GREYHOUND.

THEY gave him to me—for my play—
A greyhound—slender—silver-grey
As winter skies, and smooth as though
The queen had stroked him with her hand;
Rare jewels in his collar glow;
His tongue curls like a crimson brand.
Like wind he hunts the deer; at night
He walks the marble halls unheard.
The lilies all stand stiff and white
When he and I go by: each bird
Forgets to sing or far off flies;
The stunted trees that gardeners trim
Seem more sedate—in straighter rows—
As up and down the paths he goes
With measured step and half-closed eyes—
And I—just follow after him.

They hanged a beggar—his dog lay
Outside the wall—small—dusty-grey.
Along the high-road he had run;
But that road passes underneath
Great boughs where birds nest and the sun
Sometimes will hang a ruby wreath
Of ripening fruit, and where for years
No gardener passed—trees are so tall
He could not reach them with his shears.
They stoned the dog—outside the wall.
If they hanged me, my dog I know
Would never care—but stand and while
They hanged me wait as he waits here—
His long nose pointed like a spear,
Eyes closed and sharp teeth white as snow,
His thin lips curled—I saw him smile!

THE QUESTION.

A BIRD—the fairest in the world—I sought.
Far past the clouds where purple islands lie
My ships I sent; a bird that talked they brought,
That only gold, ships full of gold, could buy.

A priceless parrot that on rare fruits fed
And seeds of flowers, all the day he seemed
To echo with shrill voice what gossips said,
Or clawed and clutched his gilded perch and screamed.

The emerald-colored feathers on his breast
Were tipped with gold, as leaves with morning light;
His wings were ruby-red; his shaded crest
From light blue changed to star-lit blue of night.

People I brought from all the country-side
To gaze upon him: they stood wondering.
One brown-eyed child from all the great throng cried:
“And does it ever build a nest or sing?”

THE BLACK SWAN.

IN state beside the stream the queen passed by ;
With her own hands her snow-white swans she fed ;
Her pages clad in scarlet formed her train ;
Each bore a golden goblet full of grain.

Her velvet cloak was blown above her head,
And rose a purple thundercloud on high.

“Whence came this swan as black as ebony ?”
Sea-green and cold as emeralds were her eyes.

“Drive from my flock this strange, dark swan,” she said ;
Her pages stoned him ; from the flock he fled ;
Then down the stream they followed him with cries,
Until the black swan fled into the sea.

His crown like fire beneath the sunlight shone,
And weary was the queen’s young son of play.
Beside the sea that morn he paused to rest ;
He saw the black swan swimming on the breast
Of the cool water ; down each winding way
He looked to see if he were all alone.

His crown upon a willow branch he hung ;
Upon the grass his sapphire belt fell low
Like sparkling dew ! His soft robes slipped away
From his small body, till at last they lay
In golden folds about his feet as though
A wreath of daffodils, unseen, had sprung !

He stood there laughing—then he swam out far :—

The queen walked in her bower beside the sea :—
She heard him laugh and call the swan to play ;
Far out she saw the black swan lead the way ;
And as she gazed the wind rose suddenly :
The sky turned black as night without a star !

That morn their broken nets all shining bright
Some fishermen found on the beach, flung high
By breakers in the night. “O something fair
Among the shells and weeds lies tangled there !
Is this a mermaid’s sleeping child ?” they cry.

“How silently he lies ! How silver-white !”

INDISCRETION.

It did not happen in the gargoyles' lair
Up where he mused ; that day the nave was warm
With purple, red and gold ; the king was there,
Leaning upon the great da Vinci's arm ;
It was High Mass : an acolyte turned round
Wide-eyed and pointed down at Stephen's back ;
He knelt, unconscious that a long tail wound
Out from his vestments, pointed, snakelike, black !
The bishop's eyes met mine ; I understood,
And swiftly glancing back of him gasped—"No" ;—
Then gazed behind myself to find all clear.
We served King Francis Christ's own flesh and blood.
Yes, Stephen was too indiscreet, you know.
Just what became of him ? Draw close—your ear. . . .

ELIZABETH.

A CANDLE burning bright will be
A pledge this night to wed with me ;”
The south-flown birds in the dead tree
A song had left ; the branches swayed,
It echoed ; through the sun-rays strayed,
Each leaf in dancing light arrayed,
Beneath where gold-spun shadows played,
The young king kissed Elizabeth.

Near by her shepherd lover lay,
Alone ; she smiled, from her breast drew
His gift, a rose ; its petals threw
Into the wind :—loud snapped his bow ;
Like a spring flower in the snow
Too early blossomed, she drooped low.
“No candle bright this night will glow !”
The sky was red with dying day.

The young king saw no candle light,
The mocking stars above him shone,
Back through the dew he rode alone ;
Loud in the castle court he cried ;
“I go to seek a royal bride !”
As down a barren mountain side
The wild winds sweep, the castle sighed,
Then roared like storm-tossed seas at night.

The flashing torches light far flung
As though the night a chain had hung
Across the hills, of stars close-strung ;
A hundred heralds trumpets blew,
The ring of arms and laughter :—through
The trembling tree the echoes flew
Where night winds rest and gently strew
The dead leaves o’er Elizabeth.

SOUTHAMPTON FOREST.

ELIZABETH, to-day I lay
In faery woods. The secret book,
Which Vivian from Merlin took,
Here intimately in some nook
Without a doubt was placed away ;
And in the earth the pages grew
Till magic words their freedom knew
From years of written bondage ; through
The grasses, vines, and trees they flew
More fleet than life on spring's first day !

The arts unleashed, each root now feeds
On mystery ; strange fancy slips
Through eager boughs to leafy tips,
Each trembling twig emotion sips,
Adventure to adventure leads ;
Then O, the emerald alley-way
For elf or sentimental fay,
With mosses green and holly gay—
A whimsically placed display
Of faery craft for faery needs.

No birds make music now—although
The birches here still interlace
Their slim white boughs with fragile grace
As though about to dance in place
A figure intricate and slow ;
That tall one—in the center there—
Loved by a sprite ! Who else would dare
Deny persistent frost and wear
Those leaves ? Erect, she lifts with care
The skirts of her gold dress—just so.

The surly oak—that must be where
They tore away the twisted sticks
To burn the zealous heretics ;—
What angular, fantastic tricks
The limbs play as they clamber there !

Some master on this crooked tree
Found switches harsh as wood can be
To beat small scholars 'cross his knee;
Or on that writhing branch maybe
A robber hanged and danced on air.

Its neighbour—what a gentle tree!
Here music that the summer wrung
From willing throats of birds has hung
In leafy refuge—nests have sung
On high there in security;
Around its trunk the mosses grow
And ivy clings—they love it so!
While even irritating snow
That tears the leaves and flings them low
Clings to its boughs all trustingly.

And look with what austerity
The long pines with their stark trunks raise
On high their branches' Gothic maze;
Close-banded like lean knights they gaze
For phantom foes they never see;
But one, whose thick boughs touch the ground
And rest there, seems to have gazed round
So long, and still no tyrant found,
That finally without a sound
He sat him down with dignity.

While like some dowager a tree
Of holly occupies a hill,
And year by year adds frill on frill
Of polished leafy skirts until,
Youth gone, she sinks contentedly
Into a bountiful decline;
Her berries all round rubies shine;
Tiaras, ear-rings, bright wreaths twine
The leaves, each pointed sharp and fine;
Formal. But then—what company!

Behind her back, behold them there
Mere striplings—holly-trees who late
Were sprigs now aping man's estate—
Rare rogues with ruffs of leaves too great
By far for slender twigs to bear ;
Flamboyant gallants who delight
In boisterous crowds and desperate might,
While flowers close their petals tight,—
These rakes, I swear carouse all night
On sparkling dew, without a care.

This winding pathway leads into
A bower where leaves, wind-woven, spread
Their lacy canopy o'erhead,
And tender mosses form a bed ;
While past the trees there gleams in view,
All edged with ivy carpets rare,
A lake, the living mirror where
At morning you could comb your hair,
Prepared, Elizabeth, with care,—
All wizard-wise arranged for you !

EARTH IN WINTER.

O EARTH in winter is a nun
On patient, bended knee;
Her robes are shining garments bright
Of crystal purity;
But 'neath her smooth and chilly robe,
Despite her lowered head,
There burns an eager, ardent soul,
A heart of flaming red!
And in her cloister-cell at night
When stars are glittering,
She kneels, and fervently awaits
The paradise of spring.

AUTUMN.

THE Autumn is a dowager,
Now lame and short of breath,
Who hears old Winter rumble near
In his cold coach of death ;
Straight at her mirror she sits down—
Her tricks are over-old—
A tinselled dress, false blush of red,
Unnatural hair of gold.
More scarlet now she paints her cheeks—
Rehearses every art—
A veil of yellow foliage !
Still she may win his heart !

THE NIGHT.

At dawn the lusty sun-god leapt
Up to her lattice wide;
The morning followed where he stepped;
A glory marked his stride.

His glowing arms for her were spread,
He shook his golden hair;
She woke and swiftly round her bed
She drew the curtains there.

The youthful sun-god does not know
Her true love comes by night,
Bent as a barren bush with snow
By his long beard of white.

When frogs down in the sunken pool
Among the iris croak,
He comes with fiddle and with fool
And bells beneath his cloak.

When wine is red and guests are gay
O candles are so bright!
The sun-god, girded with the day
Will bring her morning light;

But her true love has purple shoon,
Six coaches at his call,
And rings far rarer than the moon—
A feast in every hall!

O glaring, stupid morning sky!
Black is the lattice where
She dances in her chamber high—
Her true love on the stair.

THE POPPIES OF THE KING.

THE drowsy poppies wreathed in sleep
The marble fountain of the king,
As wine-red rubies in a ring
About a snow-white throat will cling.
The birds that flew there did not sing,
But brooded by the fountain deep.

At eve the king in state passed by ;
He saw the poppies sleeping there ;
“The traitors on their helmets wear
Red poppies—bid my gardeners tear
These weeds away, and fling them where
The black-winged ravens swoop and cry !”

Again the king walked there and cried :
“My army lost !” His crown he threw
Aside and fled in silence through
Tall poppies of a scarlet hue—
Where they were flung to die they grew
Along the highway far and wide.

Still slowly down the dusty way
The weary king through poppies fled ;
Then fell, his cloak drawn o’er his head.
With cries and golden claws widespread
The ravens swooped—in rows blood-red
The wakened poppies danced that day !

THE GOBLIN'S BRIDE.

WHY should she wed a goblin king—
She for whom tasselled princes sighed,
And troubadours went wandering,
And knights in silver armor died.

For when she rode her palfrey white
Through tangled streets of towered towns,
Young men turned poets at the sight
And grey-beards blinked away their frowns.

But O her heart the goblin won,
She gave him all her silken hair;
His oafs rare carpets of it spun
For cavern hall and secret stair.

The sparkle of her eyes he took
To deck his crown, and made a light
For passage-way and secret nook
With luster of her skin so white.

If villagers at evening went
Into the hills they often spied
Against the sky jet-black and bent
Her figure on some lone hillside.

When naked trees their arms fling high
To clasp wet branches overhead,
And lightning cracks apart the sky
While clouds their angry torrents shed,

Good people bar their door-ways tight
And circle round the ingle-side;
"The goblin king," they say, "to-night
Is sporting with his stolen bride."

IV. A TRANSPLANTED GARDEN.

TO MEN UNBORN.

WHEN spring comes on with freshness of new leaves,
And gypsy meadows don their festive gear
Of colored blooms, and when the plough-man cleaves
The rich brown earth and skies are blue and clear,
When all the earth in sun goes revelling
Until with life the autumn overflows
And men ripe fruits and grains go gathering
To trade in towns where peaceful commerce flows,
Know then, O men unborn, in vain we cried
For peace and drew forgotten swords and sent
Our youth to battle youth—so young they died
All careless of the precious gift they spent!
O priceless peace! Paid for with such dear life!
Peace seen afar through grief and hate and strife!

THE AMERICANS.

THEY grasped no future—touched no sacred ground—
Nor caught the lingering essence left from days
Made rich with man's desire—they only found
This country lacked America's fresh ways.
Yet here they brought the movement and the glow
That cities forming in a new world make,
And gave their bodies proudly—lived to know
The tyranny of arms they died to break.
O France, now by your many dead you see
Our promised summer broken in your land—
This is our very heart of spring that stains
The red, red road to peace! Will victory
Hide all these shattered limbs? Will time's sure hand
Erase war's record? Still the truth remains.

PANGLOSS AGAIN.

WHEN brisk September blows the leaves away—
All summer's art to wind-tossed nothing cast—
Though winter come unwelcomed, still we say,
 "Wild roses wither for their time has past."
But when some scarcely-opened blossoms fade
 As rough March scolds them with his frosty breath,
"Here nature failed," we say, "they were not made
 To wake so early into snowy death."
Then have these sons of ours untimely died,
 And have we marched on some mistaken way
 That they so young in France all sunless lie?
We answer, "No! Grief should be lost in pride.
 They battled for our cause—our glory they!
 These men were young—it was their lot to die."

THE TUILERIES.

THE gardens of the Tuileries are grey
And steeped in twilight's ever-passing trance;
Through the deserted paths about me stray
The figures of the vanished kings of France.

Pale ghosts, unreal as dreams of blossoms lost
When snow falls with unquestioned mastery,
Or festive song-birds keeping tryst where frost
Harshly unsummers earth's reality.

Look how the flock of courtiers deftly parts
For cardinal and mistress, arm in arm,
Bound to one prize—the state—with finished arts—
His church's power and her body's charm.

While here some Louis all divinely right,
On gilded heels in his brocaded pride,
Kisses the lady with hair powdered white—
Worn like a withered dandelion puffed wide.

What do you seek? Some trace of majesty?
Strange that you find this dimly idle place
So swiftly faded! Can this silence be
The final flower of your showered grace?

Yes—Paris stands. There is the Louvre—near by
The Seine flows on past all the touch of things,
While in this transient hush earth waits a sky
Still crowned with stars despite the fall of kings.

Why do you whisper so and gather near—
That frowning fellow points a pompous hand—
You notice me? Why am I sitting here?
Well, time—but then, how could you understand?

IN THE HOSPITAL, A. E. F.

No glow of battle made your sacrifice
Seem glorious to men, O lonely dead!
Through sleep he passed—in noble grief he lies
Mourning life's miracle so lately fled.
O sunless hands! O body marred and worn!
Perhaps some woman's care turned joy in you,
"My son for life's great victories was born—
A thousand things have told me it is true,
Is he not mine—beyond all knowledge dear?"
And dreaming on through fear as women will
Her thoughts seemed truth—to-night she cannot know
That even now her all lies finished here.
O God how piercing cold the air and still!
How passionless and changeless white the snow!

A JAZZ BAND AT NICE.

AT Nice a jazz band plays beside the shore—
A doughboy troop that faced death in the north.
Though they knew all the grimness of late war,
Has rapture ever burst so freely forth?
Just so perhaps the haunts of Bacchus rang
When little fauns appeared all curiously
Among the vines with twitching tails and sprang
To toss their limbs in dance by the blue sea.

No cloven hoof raced to a madder horn
Churning the grass with the rich, yielding earth;
No heralding of riot, satyr-born,
Outrang that careless cymbal's crashing mirth!
No joy from flesh with more abandon went;
No wine-stained lips blew out a wilder flare—
With more ecstatic liberation sent
The music of young bodies through the air.

I tell you, wanton fauns, you never caught
White nymphs beneath a bluer sky than this,
Or panting from rich sport in revel sought
Fresh waves so dazzled with the sun's fierce kiss!
Men heard you calling, Pan, when earth was ripe
With youth—you sleep to-day?—such life is flung
Through all the morning—that man-drunken pipe!
Rise up, you satyrs, for earth still is young!

VITTEL, THE PARK, December, 1917.

ONCE in this desolating park were found
All pleasures that the careless could devise;
To-night the devastating cannons sound—
Dull rumourings of distant death arise.

Impassive moon, over blind night is shed
The sterile luster of your pallid pall!
Come you, round record of a world now dead,
A silver prophet mirroring earth's fall?

You constellations that unchanged have kept
Your ancient pattern in star-ordered space,
Gazing on earth, why not long since have leapt
Angered in fiery fierceness from your place?

O sleeping trees, where birds in rapture hung
On boughs now bare, deserted by their flight,
That rise like lyres all silent and unstrung,
Neglected by the artless winds of night—

Bleak trees, beguiled by spring you trustingly
Displayed your splendour till each twig was lost
In miracles of life, and lived to see
Your glory touched to nothing by the frost.

Why when the spring comes do you ever give
That life in eagerness—creating, spend
Your strength for beauty that so longs to live—
Knowing the snows of winter make an end?

Mild moon, proud stars, and trees in patient sleep,
This truth is yours, secure in griefless might:
Not all the tears the unborn years will weep
Could bring the flowers from the ground to-night.

TO AN A. E. F. STOVE.

You smoking tyrant of my wintry days,
Erratic master of my faithfulness,
I was late drudge of all your dusty ways,
Fed you and cleansed you, bore your sullenness;
Those days when your red sides were all aglow
(O rare and happy times!) I coaxed your fire,
Opened the window—fixed the draft just so:—
How I have catered to your least desire!
But April's here—fling out the window wide!
Drink in the sun and watch the daffodils
Dance yellow in the breeze—O breath of spring!
Helpless you stand in empty, fallen pride.
You are so deadly dull that my heart fills
With pity for you—useless—lifeless thing!

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